GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:417
ANSWERED ON:16.04.2001
TASK FORCE FOR STD/ISD/PCO BOOTH OPERATORS
AMBATI BRAHMANAIAH

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited(BSNL) has set up a Task Force to minimise the problem of STD/ISD/PCO boot operators;

(b) if so, whether the Task Force has submitted its report;

(c) if so, the details of recommendations made therein;

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(e) if not, the time by which the report is likely to be submitted?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF STARRED QUE NO. 417 FOR 16TH APRIL, 2001 REGARDING TASK FORCE FOR STD/ISD/PCO BOOTH OPERATORS.

A Task Force was constituted by BSNL to study the challenges faced by STD payphone operators, the impact of BSNL concessional tariff, change in commission if justified and extension of service charges to PCO operators for Level-95 calls. The Task Force has already submitted its report. The main recommendations of the Task Force are given in the Annexure. The recommendations alongwith the demands raised by the PCO operators and their Associations have been considered. It has been decided, inter-alia, to increase the commission of STD/ISD/PCO franchisees from 16.6% to 20% in urban areas and to allow Service Charge of Re. 1/- anc Rs. 2/- on intra circle calls beyond 100kms. in rural and urban areas respectively.

ANNEXURE

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF TASK FORCE

i) In Circles where competition is prevailing from Cellular and Basic Services, the flexibility in fixing the commission in the range of 20 paise and 30 paise should be applicable only to locations/places where both the services are operational. For locations/places where Cellular Services are operational the flexibility in fixing commission may remain between 20 paise and 25 paise.

ii) A service charge of Re. 1 for calls dialed with `95` code at the rate of Re. 1 upto a bill amount of Rs. 6 (exclusive of service tax) and Rs. 2 above the bill amount of Rs. 6 may be permitted. A service charge of Re. 1 may also be permitted on level `98` calls in Circles as for `95` calls except in Calcutta and Chennai.

iii) there is no need to change the commission in areas where there is no competition from Basic or Cellualr Services.Enhanced commission need not be made applicable to rural STD PCOs where 25% commission is already being paid.

iv) the PCO operators should be encouraged to market the services better to increase the volume of traffic and hence their revenues.

v) ISDN lines on concessional rentals and commission applicable to PCOs working on ordinary lines may be permitted to the existing PCO operators. They can be allowed run various kinds of value added services on the ISDN line at prices to be determined by them.

vi) The franchises may be encouraged to see VCC cards, SIM cards and market other services of BSNL on commission basisThey may also become agents for bill collection by cheque subject to appropriate terms and conditions.

vii) In order to have better visibility, the STD PCO services may be given brand name and it should be mandatory for all franchisees to use that brand name on their display boards.

viii) Inducting cash card/pre-paid card services in respect of STD PCO operators which can be used I n conjunction with specially designed pay-phones available in the market and also being used by other basic service operators could be considered.